

As to the speed attained: full speed on the Rann in my own Ford meant 35 to 36 miles per hour. In one instance a young buck fairly ran away from my car travelling at this pace, and must have been doing not less than 38 at the end of eight minutes, which I tried as an experiment, without firing after a third miss and letting him go. H. H. the Maharajah assured me that on one occasion, he was driving, I think, an Overland car, when a buck was shot by Mr. C.A.H. Edwards of the P.W.D. who was with him, the speedometer showed 42 m. p.h.! The buck was broadside on, going as fast as the car, and when shot dead fell and slid with its own momentum a distance of 27 measured yards from the spot; of course the surface cannot have been very dry at the time. Mr. Edwards confirmed the correctness of these figures.

(II) THE WILD ASS (*Equus hemionus*).

The Rann of Cutch is well known as the permanent habitation of the Asiatic Wild Ass, whose comparatively close acquaintance in the wild state a Ford car has enabled me to make. In February last I took a friend, with my wife, out on the Rann to shoot a blackbuck. On our way back, close to the southern shore, the mirage on the sky-line showed a number of weird figures which presently resolved themselves into a little herd of the Rann donkeys which I had been most anxious to see but had not come across before. They were able to attain a very useful pace, but could not compete with the car, though on our near approach they jinked away with no lack of agility. We were late and had no time to spare but had a good look at them for two or three minutes at a distance of about a dozen yards. What struck me very much at first sight was the parti-coloured effect produced by the alternating patches of white and light reddish-grey which composed their colouring, reminding one of the Noah's Ark animals of one's childhood, and quite unlike the uniform style of coating of the Somali Wild Ass.

I longed for a camera but had none with me. On a subsequent occasion, however, I did succeed in taking some fairly good snapshots of a donkey from my car, but I was not as successful as Mr. Edwards who has very kindly permitted me to make use of some better ones taken by himself in similar conditions. I enclose three of these interesting and probably unique photographs; one at least of them should reproduce well.

I also send photos taken by myself of a captive mare of the Wild Ass, now in the possession of H. H. the Maharajah of Dhrangadhra, and of a two-year old hybrid colt of hers, sired by a bay country-bred pony. This interesting youngster is smaller than the mother, of a uniform bright brown colour. As to the pace of the Wild Ass I may mention that on the open Rann I found them able to attain and keep up without difficulty a speed of 26 miles per hour.

A WHITE CHINKARA (*Gazella bennetti*.)

Though it has nothing to do with the Rann, it may be of interest to mention here, an albino chinkara doe in possession of His Highness, which was found ϵs a week-old fawn near Dharangadhra last year. Of it also I enclose a photograph.

A. H. MOSSE,

WADHWAN, October 1922.

MAJOR, I.A.

No. III.—SOME NOTES ON THE COMMON INDIAN OTTER (*LUTRA LUTRA*).

(With a photo.)

It may be of interest mentioning a few facts in connection with the food and habits of this animal.

According to Blanford, the Common Indian Otter inhabits nearly the whole of India and Ceylon and also occurs east of the Bay of Bengal.

The otter which I am writing about, and of which I also give a photograph, was caught in the Pamber River, Kodaikanal, S. India, at an elevation of 7,000 ft. He came to a meat bait; the meat was that of a Jerdon's Civet, (*P. jerdoni*) which still had the odour of the animal about it.

After having skinned the animal, I examined the stomach to see what it had been feeding on. The main part of the contents of the organ was that of decayed wood and crabs. In addition to the above mentioned, there was a quantity of green leaves (which I was unable to identify owing to their being partially digested), plus some other material.

As there were hardly any fish and not many crabs in the stream I suppose it took to eating the wood in order to still its hunger or may be for some other unseen reason.

What nourishment the otter derived from this diet is hard to say; but nevertheless the animal was in a very good condition. As regards the food, Blanford writes as follows:—"They live chiefly upon fish, crustacea and frogs, and as is well known, when they find food plentiful, kill far more than they require to eat." These animals also occur in the Kodai Lake. They have been known to attack ducks when on the water and even dogs while swimming. The presence of otters in a stream or lake may be easily detected, as the animals usually come out of the water and deposit their excreta on rocks in the stream or on the banks. If not disturbed they generally come to the same place every time, except perhaps when on their way up or down stream.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
15th January 1923.

C. McCANN.

No. IV.—TIGER CLIMBING A TREE.

At Hungpru in Mergui District, three Karen elephant catchers had a machan 50 ft. above ground in the fork of a fairly high tree. Five feet below the machan the tree forked. There was a bamboo ladder leaning up against the tree by which they used to ascend. The ladder met the tree 10 feet above ground and was tied to the tree (right up against it) for a further 35 feet, *i.e.*, up to the fork. At 4 a.m. the Karens were awakened by the tree swaying, being dark they could see nothing but heard some animal breathing in the fork below them which they thought was a bear. By shaking the machan they were able to shake the beast off the fork, and heard it clawing while sliding down the tree till it stuck the ground where it roared and then made off. The same morning at 10 a.m. the Karens came to my camp and told me the above tale. I went out and saw the tree and noticed the following:—The tree was heavily scratched from the fork downwards for 35 feet down to where the ladder first met the tree, the scratches were long, deep, claw marks, nothing like those made by a bear when coming down, and were placed alternately on either side of the tree as if the animal had swung during its descent. At the foot of the tree were two bamboo stumps with sharp tops, these tops were covered with blood for about 5 inches and were split, the interstices being full of red and white hair. The elephant path leading away from the machan bore the pugs of a large tiger coming towards and going away from the tree. The ground near the foot of the tree had been torn up with deep scratches. Out of the last lot of scratches on the tree I cut a claw which had been wrenched off.

The width of the ladder was about 14". I found it very difficult getting to the fork of the tree up this ladder as it was absolutely perpendicular.